

for students, families, and taxpayers. This bill will not only increase efficiency in the loan programs, but will also generate increased competition, resulting in increased benefits for students and families.

The Student Aid Reward Act has also been introduced in the Senate by Senators EDWARD KENNEDY and GORDON SMITH.

No qualified person should ever be prevented from going to college because of the cost. We must ensure that every student in this country has the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

#### VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT SALUTES FATHER ROBERT DRINAN

### HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2007*

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, last week, several of my colleagues and I memorialized the life and record of the late Father Robert Drinan, one of the most distinguished people to have served in this body. Father Drinan's political career began in 1970 when he ran for Congress as an opponent of American participation in the Vietnam War. He was a consistent fighter for peace throughout his life. When I returned to my district last weekend, I received from Father Drinan's sister-in-law, Helen Drinan, a woman who played a very important role in nurturing his political career, a copy of a letter she had received that meant a great deal to her and the Drinan family.

The letter is from the Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States, hailing Father Drinan "as a tenacious advocate for social justice and a resilient fighter for peace." Madam Speaker, I ask that this letter from the Government of Vietnam to the Drinan family be printed here.

EMBASSY OF VIETNAM,  
Washington, DC, January 31, 2007.

Mrs. HELEN DRINAN,  
Newton, MA.

DEAR MRS. DRINAN, On behalf of the people and Government of Vietnam, I would like to extend the most profound condolences to you and to your family on the passing of your brother-in-law, Father and Congressman Robert F. Drinan.

Father Robert F. Drinan will be always remembered by many as a tenacious advocate for social justice and a resilient fighter for peace. For the Vietnamese people, he will remain a staunch fighter who made significant contribution to ending to the Vietnam War in the 1970s, thus bringing peace to the country after so many decades of wars.

May your family overcome this most difficult time.

Respectfully,

NGUYEN TAM CHIEN,  
Ambassador.

#### INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDENT AID REWARD (STAR) ACT OF 2007

### HON. THOMAS E. PETRI

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2007*

Mr. PETRI. Madam Speaker, today I am again joining with my colleague, Chairman

GEORGE MILLER, to reintroduce our Student Aid Reward (STAR) Act, which would provide billions of dollars in additional aid to students at no additional cost to taxpayers. Now, more than ever, millions of low and middle-income families are struggling to help their children attend college in the face of rising tuition costs and limited financial assistance. The STAR Act is a fiscally-responsible plan that could help make college more affordable and accessible for these students.

The STAR Act is rooted in my longstanding belief that we have a fundamental obligation to our constituents to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in government spending wherever it exists. Our legislation would encourage colleges and universities to utilize the less expensive of the federal government's two main student loan programs. In doing so, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that the STAR Act would save taxpayers \$13.4 billion in wasteful subsidies—which would instead be devoted to increase student aid to low and middle-income students who need it most.

The real opportunity in this legislation is that it would allow for an increased investment in education while not costing taxpayers a single penny more. In fact, under the STAR program, there would be enough savings not only to return half to schools that switch to the more cost-effective program, but also to provide an additional 25 percent of those savings to schools that were previously enrolled in the cost-effective program and thus already saving taxpayers money. The final 25 percent would be devoted towards deficit reduction.

All these savings are to be made possible due to the startling difference in the cost between the two federal student loan programs. For the current fiscal year, the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program costs more than the exact same loan administered under the Direct Loan (DL) program. According to President Bush's 2008 education budget, student loans made through the more expensive program in 2007 cost \$3 more for every \$100 lent than the same loans made with U.S. Treasury funds.

Beyond the Office of Management and Budget, other budget experts continue to confirm this cost difference. Earlier this week, the Congressional Budget Office released a score that projected savings from this amendment in the amount of \$13.4 billion over the next 10 years—and that's if only 15 percent of colleges choose to participate in the Student Aid Reward program by switching from the FFEL to the DL program. Those savings would be even more substantial with increased participation.

It is important to note that the STAR Act would not mandate that schools select the most cost-effective program, although we hope that they would. Under this bill, each college retains their ability to choose their student loan program. Those who choose to be more responsible with taxpayers money would be rewarded with a portion of the savings. Those that decide to continue with the more expensive program face no penalties, other than a missed opportunity to use taxpayer savings to boost their students' Pell Grants. Furthermore, each school would have the choice to leave the STAR program at the end of their 5-year contract if they are not satisfied with the results for their students.

A critical component of this program is that it is budget neutral. Any reward payments to

schools are contingent upon actual taxpayer savings that year. We are confident that these savings not only exist, but amount to several billion dollars annually. Both the CBO and OMB continue to confirm this year after year.

The overarching reason that the FFEL program is so much more expensive than the DL program is the excessive subsidies paid to lenders each year to issue loans. As all lenders are guaranteed the exact same subsidies, regardless of their costs and efficiency, lenders do not compete for the benefit of taxpayers, only among themselves for market share. This practice is not only unnecessary but it is irresponsible—especially when the DL program has no similar costs.

The taxpayers not only pay interest subsidies to private lenders, they also subsidize the 13 guaranty agencies that purchase loans from the lenders after a certain period of time has passed. This is also a wasteful practice—especially when the DL program has no similar cost.

I would like to reiterate that this legislation would in no way mandate that schools choose the DL program over the FFEL program, or even that the DL program will always necessarily be the most cost-effective program. Instead, the legislation stipulates that the Secretary of Education shall determine each year which program is most cost-effective to taxpayers and that schools who participate in that program receive some of the savings. The Secretary would do this by making use of the best data available each year.

Madam Speaker, I believe that as stewards of taxpayers' money, Congress should always seek to make government more efficient and more accountable. Our legislation is smart policy: voluntary for schools, fiscally-responsible, and would provide over \$10 billion in additional aid over the next 10 years. I encourage my colleagues to join Rep. MILLER and me in cosponsoring this legislation.

#### RECOGNIZING NICOLE MAYHEW AS SANTA ROSA COUNTY, FLORIDA'S TEACHER OF THE YEAR

### HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 13, 2007*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, on behalf of the U.S. Congress, it is an honor for me to rise today to recognize Nicole Mayhew as Santa Rosa County's Teacher of the Year.

As a native of Northwest Florida, Nicole Mayhew joined the Santa Rosa County School District administration in 1996, after graduating from the University of West Florida with a degree in Primary/Elementary Education. Mrs. Mayhew has proudly served the School District for over 10 years, where she currently teaches first grade at West Navarre Primary School in Navarre, Florida. On January 26, 2007, with her husband Steven and her daughter Erin by her side, Nicole Mayhew was announced Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Mayhew serves as a mentor to beginning teachers and supervises teachers from the University of West Florida. She is a member of the Santa Rosa County, Florida Reading Council and West Navarre Primary School's Parent-Teacher Organization, PTO, an organization of Parents and Teachers that